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SUBJECT: SUDAN: TALKING POINTS FOR MARCH 6 OCHA  
BRIEFING

1. USUN may draw from the following talking points for their March 6 briefing in the Security Council by Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes.

Begin talking points:

-- The United States condemns the decision by the Government of Sudan to expel from its borders 13 foreign based NGOs and completely dissolve 3 local NGOs. Together these NGOs provide approximately 70% of the humanitarian aid being delivered in Darfur.

-- The Government of Sudan's reckless decision has endangered 4.7 million of their own citizens and flouts numerous resolutions of this Council. Although thus far, these actions have only affected assistance to Darfur, we are deeply concerned about the possible impact they could have on the critical aid being provided throughout the rest of Sudan, especially the South and Three Areas. These NGOs have decades of experience assisting the Sudanese people. Their work keeps people alive, and their forced departure immediately and seriously threatens the lives and well-being of millions of people. The United States fully supports their work and strongly backs their ability to continue their life-saving efforts unobstructed.

-- Over the last two days the United States Government has reached out to the Government of Sudan in Khartoum, Washington, and New York to urge it to reconsider these expulsions. I know the United Nations and many other concerned members states have reached out to the Government of Sudan as well. Unfortunately, the Government of Sudan has chosen not to listen. We call on all states, especially those in this body and others that have influence with top Sudanese officials, to press the GOS to reverse this decision.

-- The UN and other humanitarian agencies that remain in Darfur are simply not capable of filling the void left by these NGOs, as they are already stretched to capacity.

-- The international community must make it crystal-clear to the Sudanese government that it will be held accountable for the humanitarian consequences of its decision to expel these NGOs.

-- Regarding an Article 16 deferral, the United

States has made its position perfectly clear. We do not support it.

--These most recent actions of the GOS only worsen the situation.

Questions for Holmes:

-- Does the UN have contingency planning to meet the void left by the departing NGOs?

-- What kind of programs will the UN not be able to replace due to the NGO expulsions? Is there a system of prioritizing assistance?

-- What kind of support will you need from the international community? Do you have available emergency funding to cover expanded operations? Do you need an emergency funding appeal?

End talking points.

CLINTON